

Dear Jim,

We had a good meeting on Monday eve.
We discussed the McCourtys visit and the meeting
on Thursday also the press statements. We are hoping
he will attend a press conference as well. We
also discussed the lobby of the Ball District
Council. Within the Labour Party things are
moving to hell hally M'Gordon is making
hor news on this. We also discussed the
Big Show in the Pavilion in Nov etc. Sub
Committees are working well on this under Brendan.

To Ya the Noo
Ned.

623 Hawthorn St.
Glasgow G2 2GA
041-558-6364

Dear Jim,

Enclosed please find latest from NSS.
Campaign still doing well. We had a small
but good meeting with McCartney &
Donnelly. Michael is going to town on
the whole thing with an article in ~~bulletin~~
~~bulletin~~ in the Herald on the Whole Scandal
story. Do you have a FAX No.

Anyway here is Tommy Hayes' No.

041 552 5519

All the Best to You
& Family
Ned Donaldson

PS. All the arrangements have
been sorted out for
Ireland, see you
Elaine.

Co *Co*
From Bill Hattan, "Tanera", Mid Letter, Strachur, Argyll PA27 8DP
Tel 0369 86 788 9th July 1990

To my former colleagues in the City Chambers.

I am addressing this letter to a number of you in the hope that you will pass around. The controversy in the "Glasgow Herald" has been based on a variety of factors, and a lack of understanding on how the Art Galleries Dept operates:

- 1) The undoubtedly professional skills of Elspeth as Curator of the People's Palace. No one doubts for one moment her success and dedication, and it is for this reason that so many people have been outraged at her failure to be appointed Keeper of Social History.
- 2) A general ignorance on the part of the public to appreciate that such appointments are not the prerogative of the Arts and Culture Committee, or indeed, the Convenor or Sub-Convenor. They are made by the Department's Director and other permanent officials. The elected members cannot interfere. All councillors ought to be aware of this.
- 3) Sadie and I were among the small number of Councillors who have taken much active interest in Museums and Art Galleries. We regularly attended the opening of exhibitions and paid numerous visits to the various galleries. This is not to imply criticism of our colleagues, as no councillor can keep abreast of all that goes on, including ourselves.
- 4) There has been a general lack of knowledge of the relationship between Elspeth and the Senior Staff of the Department. Over a period of years because it has not been good chiefly, I believe of the demanding attitude of the Curator. Trevor Walden, now deceased, former Director, said of her that "she had a chip on both shoulders". We both regard her as a mischievous troublemaker.
- 5) The recent report in the "Glasgow Herald" about her refusal to co-operate in staging a major exhibition in connection with the year of culture is bound to have influenced the appointment. You may say "why didn't the Directorate simply order her to get on with it?" The Department does not operate that way. There is an attitude of cordial co-operation. Maybe the Directorate should be a bit heavy handed. Perhaps this is where the fault lies. In our respective employment few of us get our own way all the time and I write from experience as a Union Officer.
- 6) The Friends of the People's Palace, I more than suspect, has been used by Elspeth to push her claims for the P.P. They were certainly most unwisely pushing for her upgrading. I am tempted to say that with Friends like them Elspeth does need enemies. They have been foolish in entering into the controversy. The sustained controversy has had the inevitable result, viz. the failure to co-operate in staging an exhibition has become public knowledge. It is interesting to note that little or no criticism of her has come from the Department. I have no doubt out of consideration for her.

The myth that the PP was starved of funding has been blown sky high. None of the museums have had anything like they needed, but the PP has had a great deal spent on it. One of the really shocking parts of the episode has been the undermining of the professional integrity of the directorate. Quite outrageous! A separate Committee and autonomy for the PP. How daft can anyone get? The "Glasgow Herald" has excelled itself in its emulation of the tabloid press.

A leading personality has not exactly been helpful in defusing the situation. Perhaps it might have been wise if the Department had made a statement at the outset of the controversy, but I suppose it is easy to be wise after the event.

"Tanera", Strachur, Argyll PA27 8DP

5.6.90

To the Editor,
Glasgow Herald.

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Sir,

You have given both sides of the Elspeth King debate quite an airing over recent weeks. It has now become apparent that the vociferousness of her supporters has now led to a revelation, as reported by Allan Laing in the Herald (30.6.90), that the People's Palace, of which Elspeth King is Curator, has refused to co-operate in staging a major exhibition at the P.P. during the year of culture. I am sorry this has had to come out, but it explains a great deal.

There have been many allegations, quite false, of underfunding and neglect of the People's Palace. I am now 60 miles from Glasgow, but I keep in touch with former colleagues and officials, and can say with authority that in the last decade the P.P. has had around 2½ million pounds spent on maintenance, structural repairs and innovations, including re-wiring, installation of an escape stair, improved access, installation of a lift, an office extension, public toilet improvements, a new tea bar, extensive rehabbing of the wintergardens involving massive repairs and renewals to the structure, and various dry rot removal works for which further funding has been obtained.. The City Architect's Department are to be commended for the attention they have given to the P.P. egged on, of course by Elspeth King.

It is a great pity that the foregoing facts had not been available to so many who criticised the appointment of Mr. Mark O'Neill, and in the course of doing so impugned the professional integrity of the appointments panel.

Sincerely,
Tel 0369 86 788.

BILL HATTAN

By ALLAN LAING

IN the space of 2000 words, Pat Lally yesterday tried to lay the ghost of the Elspeth King affair to rest.

A statement from the leader of Glasgow District Council blamed "well-heeled authors" and "diplomat" for the "inevitable 1990 Cultural Capital of Europe backlash," which had manifested itself in the King debate.

Faced with opposition from within and without the City Chambers, Mr Lally came to the defence of the council — and the city's festivals' unit — before any permanent damage was done to the 1990 celebrations.

Privately, some officials in the city have expressed fears that the ramifications of the King affair could adversely affect the success of Glasgow's reign as the European cultural capital. One senior executive warned that, in particular, there was a danger that the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition, which is already facing problems, could be even harder hit if the "unwarranted" attack on the year-long festival continued.

It was also disclosed to the Herald yesterday that, when the plans for 1990 were being drawn up two years ago, the festival

GLASGOW'S chief executive Mr Steve Hamilton last night ordered a review of security within the city chambers. This followed an incident yesterday at the close of the last full council meeting before the July recess. A young couple in the upstairs public gallery stood up and showered leaflets calling for "Justice for Elspeth King" on councillors in their seats below.

organisers held lengthy talks with the People's Palace in a bid to arrange a major "Glasgow's Glasgow" style exhibition in the museum at Glasgow Green.

The concept was apparently rejected by the People's Palace because it didn't think it had the space, nor the resources to mount such an exhibition.

A source within the council executive said: "We had endless discussions on what we wanted to do with 1990, and they said that this major event was not one of its priorities. They would rather fight for a new extension and try to improve the quality of the People's Palace."

It was while these discussions were taking place that the commercial concept of Glasgow's Glasgow was proposed and was later accepted by the council.

The subsequent Elspeth King debate, which began when the curator of the People's Palace was passed over for the key post of Keeper of Glasgow's Social

History, which went instead to a non-Glaswegian, Mark O'Neill, has focused attention on the small, but vocal, anti-City of Culture lobby which snubs the "sanitised" version of Glasgow's history in Glasgow's Glasgow, and dubs it part of the city's attempt to "yupify" itself.

Councillor Lally's statement yesterday was a stout defence of the city's 1990 efforts.

He said that it was forbidden for him or any council member to interfere with the appointment, an arrangement which protected both applicants from political favouritism, and elected members from accusations of corruption and patronage.

He said that the affair had focused attention on the inevitable 1990 backlash.

"For me the greatest pleasure of 1990 is the lack of elitism and the sheer range of access to events in 1990," he observed.

The current programme showed that there were no fewer

than 68 free events. He admitted that tickets for Favaorigi, Sinatra, and the Stones were expensive, but that was "a fact of life."

The Big Day, he said, provided the perfect antidote to commercial price-fixing, an opportunity for all of Glasgow, rich and poor, to let its hair down free.

In an indirect reference to the leaders of the anti-1990 campaign, Mr Lally said: "The only people who are excluded from 1990 are those who choose deliberately to exclude themselves. Among these are the well-heeled authors and critics who refuse to dirty their hands by participating in 1990."

He declared that the council was determined to pay no heed to the anti-Culture City lobby. They intended to use the title to its maximum advantage and milk it for all it is worth."

Last night James Kelman, the Glasgow author who has been part of the pro-King lobby, declined to comment on Mr Lally's remarks. However, he did say that he was not a well-heeled author. He was a skint one.

Lally explains.....
Editorial Comment.....